



**Doing My Share
For Clean Air**

Hop on Board

Maine's Clean School Bus Program



School districts statewide have taken action to reduce student exposure to harmful diesel exhaust emissions.

- Diesel exhaust is made up of small particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs, and pose serious health risks.
- These particles can aggravate asthma and bronchitis and can cause lung damage and pre-mature death.
- Diesel exhaust is a likely human carcinogen.
- Children are more susceptible to this pollution than healthy adults because they breathe 50 percent more air than adults.



STRATEGIES TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO HARMFUL DIESEL EXHAUST

Scientifically compiled environmental and health data clearly demonstrates that exposure to exhaust fumes inside the school bus presents a potential health risk to children and drivers. In response to this information, the Maine Association for Pupil Transportation (MAPT) and DEP have put together the following recommendations for school administrators to consider:

1. PROHIBIT OR REDUCE BUS IDLING

Limit the idling time during start-up to what is recommended by the manufacturer. Block heaters or auxiliary fuel-fired integrated heating/defrosting and pre-heat systems can help warm-up the engine to avoid starting difficulties and shorten warm-up time. Buses should be turned off and not restarted until ready to depart loading and unloading zones. This applies to daily pickup as well as activity, sports and charter trips. Place a sign in the schoolyard such as "Clean Air Zone" to remind drivers to turn off their engines.

If your current buses need the engine running to operate the flashing lights, the circuit configurations can be changed so that the battery can power the lights without the engine running.

2. REQUIRE ROUTINE MAINTENANCE & REPLACE 1990 AND OLDER BUSES

All buses should be on a routine maintenance schedule. Particular attention should be given to exhaust systems, engine compartment seals, firewall integrity and window seal and engine filters and tuning. Pre-1990 buses can pollute as much as six times more than new buses. Newer buses also have important safety features mandated by the Federal Motor Vehicles Safety standards since 1990.

3. EXAMINE THE LENGTH OF RIDES & LOCATION OF BUS PARKING LOTS

Review length of routes and minimize wherever possible. Consider using school bus routing software to reduce student time riding on bus and eliminate runs. Consider bus age when scheduling and routing relying on newer buses to make the longest trips. Relocate parking lots/loading zones to avoid exhaust fumes entering buildings.

4. ADJUST CONTRACT PROVISIONS TO PROVIDE VEHICLES THAT MINIMIZE PARTICULATE EMISSIONS AND USE LOW POLLUTING FUELS

Districts contracting for or purchasing buses should require low emissions and the best available technology. Consider retrofitting schoolbuses with pollution control equipment such as a diesel oxidation catalyst. Districts should be purchasing the lowest sulfur diesel fuel available in their area.



“MAPT recognizes that many of these recommendations are current practice for most transportation providers. We further recognize that many of these issues may impact district budgets. However, we believe these recommendations provide a common sense approach to protecting children and employees from the potential hazards of school bus exhaust fumes.”

excerpted from the MAPT 2002 Conference Resolution



HONOR ROLL OF SCHOOLS WITH NO-IDLING GUIDELINES

Send in your school bus no-idling guideline to have your school district listed on DEP's **Honor Roll of Schools**, which recognizes your schools' commitment to a healthier environment for our children. Mail to the attention of: Lynne Cayting, Maine DEP, #17 State House Station, ME 04333

**For more information, look on the internet for <www.MaineDEP.com>
Or Contact Lynne Cayting at the DEP, 207-287-2437.**

